

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The office action of November 9, 2004 has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-11, 27, and 29-36 remain pending in this application. Claims 17-26, 28 and 37-39 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; claims 12-16 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that the application contains allowable subject matter. Specifically, claims 37-39 stand objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the features of previously dependent claim 38, independent claim 27 to include the features of previously dependent claims 28 and 39, and independent claim 33 to include the features of previously dependent claim 37. Accordingly, each of independent claims 1, 27 and 33 has been amended to place that respective claim in condition for allowance.

Claims 1 and 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 5,835,791 to Goff et al. ("Goff"). The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the following combinations:

- a. claims 1-3, 6-11, 17, 18 and 33-36 over U.S. patent no. 5,717,903 to Bonola in view of U.S. patent no. 6,202,155 to Tushie et al. ("Tushie") and further in view of U.S. patent no. 5,968,152 to Staats and further in view of "OFFICIAL NOTICE;"
- b. claims 4 and 5 over the combinations of Bonola, Tushie and Staats and further in view of U.S. patent 5,996,050 to Carter et al. ("Carter");
- c. claims 19-21, 26, 27, 29 and 32 over Staats in view of Bonola;
- d. claims 22 and 23 over the combination of Staats, Bonola and Carter;
- e. claims 24 and 25 over the combination of Staats, Bonola, Carter and Tushie;
- f. claim 28 over the combination of Staats, Bonola and Carter; and
- g. claims 30 and 31 over the combination of Staats, Bonola and Tushie.

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

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Nonetheless, since claims 1, 27 and 33 have been placed in condition for allowance, claims 2-11, which ultimately depend from claim 1, claims 29-32, which ultimately depend from claim 27, and claims 34-36, which ultimately depend from claim 33, are patentably distinct over the applied art for the same reasons as their respective base claim, and further in view of the additional advantageous features recited therein. The rejection of claims 17-26 and 28 is deemed moot as these claims have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the rejected claims in a continuation application.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that no fee is required for this submission. If any fees are required or if an overpayment is made, the Commissioner is authorized to debit or credit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733, accordingly.

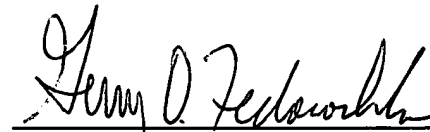
All rejections having been addressed, applicant respectfully submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicits prompt notification of the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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